

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 59-63 and 70-72, rejected claims 1-8, 11, 12, 18, 19, 21-24, 29, 30, 52, 53, 56, 57 and 64-69, and objected to claims 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 20, 27, 28, 31-34, 54, 55, and 58. The Examiner also indicated claims 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 20, 27, 28, 31-34, 54, 55, and 58 as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Without agreeing with the Examiner as to what is or is not taught by the art of record, in order to simply advance the prosecution of this case, the claims have been amended in order to put them into condition for allowance at this time. First, the Applicants incorporated certain features of the allowable dependent claim 13 and the intervening claim 11 into independent claim 1. Second, the Applicants incorporated the allowable dependent claim 9 into independent claim 7. Third, the Applicants incorporated the allowable dependent claim 27 and the intervening claim 66 into independent claim 24. Fourth, the Applicants incorporated the allowable dependent claim 55 and the intervening claim 53 into independent claim 52. Fifth, the Applicants rewrote the allowable dependent claims 10, 17, 20, 31, 33, 34, 54, and 58 into independent form. Sixth, the Applicants changed the dependencies of claims 12, 14, and 28. Seventh, the Applicants canceled claims 9, 11, 13, 27, 53, 55, and 64-66. These amendments do not add any new matter and are believed to place all claims in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 11-12, 18, 19, 21-24, 29, 30, 52, 53, 56, and 64-69 as unpatentable over Jackson, U.S. Patent No. 4,290,181, in view of Runyan et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,430,285; the Examiner rejected claim 57 as unpatentable over Jackson, U.S. Patent No. 4,290,181, in view of Jackson et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,010,271; and the Examiner rejected claims 7-8 as unpatentable over Jackson, U.S. Patent No. 4,290,181, in view of Borgen et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,439,909. In view of the foregoing amendments, the Applicants stress that the foregoing rejections are moot. All of the pending claims recite

allowable subject matter as indicated in the Final Office Action. For this reason, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the foregoing rejections.

Conclusion

The Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims should be in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve any other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Authorization for Extensions of Time and Payment of Fees

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, Applicants hereby provide a general authorization to treat this and any future reply requiring an extension of time as incorporating a request thereof. The Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fee, and any additional fees which may be due, to Deposit Account No. 06-1315; Order No. ITWO:0015/YOD/SWA.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 3, 2004



Tart R. Swanson
Registration No. 48,226
FLETCHER YODER
P.O. Box 692289
Houston, TX 77269-2289
(281) 970-4545